the bridegroom and part with her parents. The bridewealth payments now begin and the wife's parents try to hurry up the payments by luring her home on frequent visits. The bridegroom cannot prevent her departure or demand her return. To get her to return he hands over another animal and she then stays with him for a short while. This procedure is repeated until the bride is definitely recognised as his wife and stays with him except for brief visits to her old home. 585

The *riso* ceremony is the binding act of marriage. After it the husband is entitled to redress if the wife has intercourse with other men. As the husband is anxious to start a home and cannot do so while his wife keeps running back to her parents, he presses for the *riso* ceremony to be held as soon as he has paid 6 to 12 head of cattle. It is rare for a marriage to be broken off after this stage has been reached. The *riso* ceremony is held in the husband's homestead and is a day of celebration. The wife is given a series of presents by her husband's people, each gift being named as it is presented to her. She herself keeps none of them and they are taken by the girls of the *riso* party from her parents' village. [431]

The final ceremony takes place a few months later when the husband tells his wife to cook for him instead of cooking in his mother's hut. Usually after the birth of the first child he begins to built an *ot* - a proper dwelling; up to this time the couple have lived in the bachelors' hut *(simba)*. Necessary household articles are collected by the wife from her parents' home and so, after a great number of ceremonies and rituals, the union is accomplished and the basis of a family is laid.

RESPECT *(LUR)*

The Luo practise extensive avoidance as a part of the general attitude of respect to a wife's family. A man turns his back to his parents-in-law when speaking to them and avoids them if he meets them on a path. He never visits his mother-in-law naked.(1) This attitude of respect is extended to all the members of his wife's lineage, particularly the older people, and including the lineage of her maternal uncle. The husband's brothers, on the other hand, respect only his parents-in-law and immediate kin of their generation. 576 606

The avoidance rules are relaxed as the marriage gradually grows more stable and children are born. A ceremony is held at the birth of the first child to enable the husband to enter his mother-in-law's hut and eat there. The husband and his brothers are invited to eat after a goat has been presented to them.(2) 606 [431]

RITUAL AND OTHER CULTURAL FEATURES

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

The Luo believe in a supreme being whom they call Nyasi. He is 776

(1) Evans-Pritchard, *Africa*, XX, p.141. (2) *Ibid.*

3: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1936) 1950 FL11 Luo FL11

wife dies she ought to be replaced by her sister. The counterpart to this custom of the sororate is the levirate, the raising up of seed to a dead man by one of his brothers. A widow is normally taken by one of her dead husband's brothers, though if she chooses to live with a more distant kinsman of her husband her wishes will be respected. Occasionally she is taken by one of her husband's sons by a different wife, but this is rare and although not *kwer* (forbidden) it is not encouraged because it is thought that the union will not be fruitful. When it happens, it is a young and recently married wife who is taken by the son, sometimes at the express wish of the father. Brothers are the proper mates for widows and the proper guardians of their children. It is customary to get a *jawuu*, Bantu, or *jadak*, a person outside the clan, to sleep with the widow before the brother does so, in case the husband's ghost is troublesome. The trouble will then fall on the Bantu or stranger.

It must be clearly understood that the taking of a widow by her dead husband's brother is not a remarriage. No bridewealth is paid, and any children the brother may beget by the widow are called after the dead husband and not after him. The dead husband is their *pater*. His brother is only their *genitor*. If they are girls, it is their brothers and not the man who begat them who receive their bridewealth. The begetter receives only the two animals due to a father's brother, one of which is referred to in these circumstances as the cow of the begetting (*dher nyolo* or *dher oding*). Also, one does not use the verb *kendo*, the ordinary word for marrying a wife, in reference to the widow, but *atero* or *alago*, which have the sense of taking a woman to live with her. The widow is *ci liend*, the wife of the grave, that is, the wife of her dead husband.

Lwar

Luo practise very extensive avoidance, as part of a general attitude of respect (*lwr*), of their wife's people—whom the husband calls *kaowa* (my in-laws). If a man meets either of his parents-in-law on a path he makes a detour, and if he has to speak to them he does so with his back turned to them, especially when he speaks to his mother-in-law, who also turns her back to him. Even to-day when men wear clothes a son-in-law does not visit his mother-in-law without a strip of hide over his genitals. A man who neglects these rules is said to be *wangatek*, to have strong eyes, and he makes a gift in compensation for his negligence. A man respects the whole lineage into which he has married. He can face the younger people but not their elders. He respects also the older people of the lineage of his wife's maternal uncle, for they are also his *ovu*, his in-laws. The husband's brothers respect only his parents-in-law and their immediate kin of their own generation.

When the wife has borne a child the rules of avoidance are relaxed and as the years go on and more children are born relations between a man and his parents-in-law become more informal. A ceremony is held, perhaps after the birth of the first child, to enable the husband to enter his mother-in-law's hut and partake of a meal there instead of keeping strictly to the *simbo* on his visits to her home. The wife's parents send the *jagaw* to summon him and his relatives and friends—all those whom the wife calls *kaowga*, my husband's people—and when they arrive there are set before them in the mother-in-law's hut a large dish of fish, beer, melted butter, and the cooked meat of an ox killed to celebrate the occasion. They are invited to eat. The husband is silent but his brothers say that they cannot eat till they are given a goat.

4: Hobley G-5 (ca. 1900) 1902 FL11 Luo FL11

Personal marks, etc.—They draw the six middle incisors in the lower jaw. 304
If a man does not have these teeth drawn it is said that his wife will die soon after marriage. The women tattoo a pattern on the chest and stomach, consisting of thin curved lines of dots on each side reaching round to near the spine, where they turn upwards. Males are not tattooed. The tattooing is done simply for ornament.

Circumcision.—They do not circumcise. If a man has killed an enemy in war he shaves his head three days after his return from fighting. He moreover 783
does not enter his village until a live fowl has been hung round his neck, the 727
fowl is then decapitated and the head of the fowl left hanging from the man's neck. Shortly after his return a feast is made to the man who has been killed, in order that his spirit shall not come and trouble the victor.

Dress, etc.—Unmarried men go naked (Plate V). Married men who have a 291
child wear a small piece of goat skin; this piece of goat skin is a most important 576
matter for a married man, for although practically useless as a covering he must on
no account call to see his mother-in-law without this dress or she will be [606]
desperately hurt and insist on his paying up a goat. Even if he is properly clothed in European garments he must wear his goat skin underneath. Unmarried girls wear no clothes (Plate VI). Married women wear a tail of strings behind but not in front, like the Northern Kavirondo. Married women when they go to [574]
visit another village wear a goat skin slung from the shoulder, upon which curious patterns are cut. When a married woman first shows the tail, her husband presents her with a goat, which she sends to her father. It is very bad manners in amarried woman to serve up food to her husband without wearing her tail, and the husband will probably refuse to eat the food. This rule even holds if the woman should be wearing garments of cloth. If a man touches a woman's tail it is said that he wishes to bewitch her, even the husband must not touch it; if this rule is broken it is necessary to kill a goat.

Many of the Ja-Luo affect rather a notable ornamentation of the ear; about 301
fifteen small holes are pierced along the outer edge of the ear and in each hole a 304
ring of brass is inserted, and on the front side the brass is flattened out like a small leaf, to the outside extremity of each ring is attached a blue bead. In the lowest hole in the lobe of the ear a plain brass ring is inserted.

For a long time I thought that these blue beads were ordinary trade beads of 301
the variety known as *kiksi*, but upon inquiry this was indignantly repudiated, and [172]
it was explained that these beads were picked up in the fields in the neighbourhood of the Maragolia Hills after a heavy thunderstorm, and that it was believed that they descended with the rain. Some of the chiefs also wear beads of jasper and chalcedony with a fine circular hole; these beads were formerly of great value and were purchased at the rate of one cow per bead; they were picked up in the same way. Their name for these beads is Nya-Lno, and it is thought by some authorities that these beads have wandered down in ages past from the direction of Egypt; in fact some of the more Northern Nilotic people tell you that they

5: Hobley G-5 (ca. 1900) 1903 FL11 Luo FL11
Bantu Kavirondo FL4

B 791 773

that she left and went on to the Shekwi people in Nyole, where the great grandfather of Mgahanya married her, and she taught him all the secrets of the art of rain-making. The following is the genealogy of the family of rain-making chiefs:—

Agine or Ashue (married the witch).
|
Luchiri.
|
Namonwa.
|
Mgahanya.

The Cult of the "MKIA."

L B 291 171

As is well known, the dress of the female sex in Kavirondo is probably the most scanty in the world. Such as it is, perhaps its most distinctive feature is the tail, or "*mkia*," as it is termed by the Swahilis. This is common to both the Nilotic and Bantu races; among the former its name is "*chieno*," and among the latter "*livoya*." The tail is made of fibre, usually obtained from an aloe called "*tuoro*." Among the Nilotic tribes it is stiff, and fairly short, rather like a bottle-brush, from six to eight inches in length. It is usually ornamented at the top by a few small white beads, or half-a-dozen cowries, and is of the natural colour of the fibre. Among the Bantu Kavirondo it is much thinner, and is, moreover, about twelve inches in length, dyed black, and very pliant.

Finding this peculiar attire among two such different races, one cannot help thinking that it was invented by one and copied by the other, and, if anything, I incline to the view that it was introduced by the Ja-Luo, and copied by the Bantu tribes. The Lur people to the west of Lake Albert, who are very closely allied, both in speech and name, to the Ja-Luo, wear it. The Wamia people on the west side of Elgon, who are also of Nilotic extraction, wear a more elaborate and highly developed form, while many of the women belonging to tribes in the Nile Valley wear a kilt of numerous narrow strips of leather, which, one would imagine, might be fined down to the tail behind, and to the little fringe, often worn in front.

L B 291 484 576

There is an interesting ceremonial connected with this article of dress.

The "*mkia*" is the special mark of the married woman; if, however, a young girl is going on a visit to another village, she can wear one on her journey, but must take it off directly she reaches her destination, and not don it again till she leaves. This is done as a sort of artificial protective mimicry; by wearing the tail she is taken for a married woman, and is not likely to be molested by anyone she may meet on the way.

L B 291 783

If a woman who has borne a child runs out of her house in a hurry—say, because she has been beaten—and goes into another house without the tail, the house she enters is considered unclean, and the husband has to give a goat, which

14: Johnston G-4, 5 (no date) 1904 FL11 Luo FL11

near the entrance to the village, so that they can watch over any attempt to steal cattle. The hut which is directly opposite the gate of the village is usually that of the principal wife of the village head-man. There is much the same superstition as among the Bantu Kavirondo about shutting the door of a house behind a person who has just left it.[1]

Unmarried men go naked. Married men who have children wear a

498. HUSBAND AND WIFE, JA-LUO

small piece of goat skin, which, though quite inadequate for purposes of decency, is, nevertheless, a very important thing in etiquette; for a married man with a child must on no account call on his mother-in-law without wearing this piece of goat skin. To call on her in a state of absolute nudity would be regarded as a serious insult, only to be atoned for by the payment of goats. Even if under the new dispensation a man

[1] [i.e.] A very bad omen; more the Bantu equivalent to divorce if it occurs between husband and wife. (see p. 752-not processed). -Analyst]

14: Johnston G-4, 5 (no date) 1904 FL11 Luo FL11

291 wears European trousers, he must have a piece of goat skin underneath.
● 57% Unmarried girls wear no clothes. Married women wear a tail of strings

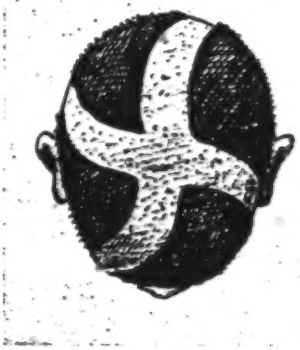
[301
142]

429. JA-LUO WOMEN: TAILS AND APRONS

behind. When they go to visit another village, they don a goat skin slung from the shoulder, upon which a curious and rather pretty pattern has been burnt with a red-hot stick. When a woman is married, she puts on

14: Johnston G-4, 5 (no date) 1904 FL11 Luo FL11

this tail behind and receives a present from her husband. Afterwards it is considered very bad manners for a married woman to serve food to her husband without putting on this tail. On the other hand, if the husband or any other man should touch the married woman's tail, it is considered that he wishes to bewitch her, and such an offence must be atoned for by the usual sacrifice of a goat.



430. PATTERN FREQUENTLY SHAVED ON MEN'S HEADS (JA-LUO)

The Ja-luo *pull out the incisors* in the lower jaw. It may also occur amongst these people, as amongst the Lango tribes to the north, that not only the four incisors, but even the canines, are taken out, at any rate from the mouths of boys. They *do not circumcise*, nor do they *scar or tattoo* their bodies, with the exception that women raise three parallel lines of dots in a semi-circle on either side of the body, the ends of the semi-circle meeting in front just below the navel, and again on the backbone. If a man has killed an enemy in war, he propitiates his enemy's spirit by shaving his head for three days after his return. Heads of men are also shaved in the pattern given in the accompanying illustration (Fig. 430).

The Ja-luo, together with tribes remotely allied in origin, such as the Sūk and Lango, *ornament the outer rim of the ear* in a remarkable manner. About fifteen small holes are pierced along the edge of the cartilage, and a flattened ring of brass (looking in shape rather like a melon seed) is inserted. Hanging on the outer side of the brass ring is a large blue glass bead. In the lowest hole towards the lobe a plain brass ring is inserted. Regarding these blue beads Mr. Hobley writes: "For a long time I thought these blue beads were ordinary trade beads of the variety known as 'kiketi'; but upon inquiry I found this idea was indignantly repudiated. It was explained to me that the beads were picked up in the fields in the neighbourhood of the Marngolia Hills* after a heavy thunderstorm, and it was believed that they descended with the rain." Some of the chiefs also wear bits of jasper and chalcedony with a fine circular hole. These beads were formerly of great value, and were purchased at the rate of one cow per bead. They are said to have been picked up in the same way. Their name for these beads is

* In North Kavirondo.

17: Southall E-5 (1946-1947) 1952 FL11 Luo FL11

6. Liver and remaining ribs and offal: for all the women of the homestead.
7. Kidneys: for the woman's sisters still in their mother's house and their friends.
8. Customary portion for the eldest married daughter of the woman's mother.
9. Customary portions to be eaten, some raw, some cooked by *bulo*, by all the elders assembled for the distribution.

It is worth while to treat this one rite at length, because it is the prototype of so many others. Its especial significance is that it takes place at the lowest level of segmentary organization, that it is bound to occur in every family as often as a daughter is married off, and that it draws into a structured participation not merely lineage leaders and senior elders but every man, woman, and child in the family. When the Luo youngster of either sex begins to grasp why, on certain occasions, it receives a special supply of kidney or ribs to roast on the fire with its playmates, its education in the theory of lineage structure has begun. The same holds true for all the wives of the men who bring home their portions of meat to be cooked, and share them with favourite wives or children, or allow them the scraps.

There are many other occasions on which meat has to be ritually divided. In every case a similar procedure is followed, with the same articulation of lineage structure. There are the sacrifices previously mentioned, which are made to the ancestor indicated by the diviner as the cause of some misfortune. Sacrifice is also made usually within a year or so of the death of any elder of importance, and the level of lineage whose major segments are called to share in it depends upon the dead man's status. If he took part in the councils of the maximal lineage its major segments would certainly be called; if he was of less importance the major segments of a lineage at some lower level would be called. A further custom occasioning a demonstration of lineage segmentation is that whereby an elder of importance chooses a bull to be eaten after his death, the segments of his lineage dividing it among themselves according to principles similar to those of *rito*.

Besides sacrifices, every beer party, of whatever size and on whatever occasion, is also a display of lineage structure at one level or another. These parties are exceedingly frequent, and most frequent of all in the comparative leisure of the dry season, when there is a pause between the completed harvest and the next cultivation not yet begun. At this time few weeks will pass without a beer party somewhere in the vicinity, and often they follow on one another for days on end. In every one there is a core of elders who epitomize the structure of the lineage segments participating in the occasion. This is all quite apart from the small quantities of beer which old men like to drink with two or three neighbours independently of any ceremonial pretext. But all parties of any size have a ritual occasion, whether it be one of the innumerable occasions resulting from death which are strung out over a period of at least one and often two years, or in connexion with marriage, or for the settlement of the periodic and seasonal affairs of a class A lineage.

In the larger beer parties the pitchers of beer are distributed among lineage segments in the same way as are the joints of meat after a sacrifice. In all of them the order of drinking is strictly determined by lineage seniority, starting with the representatives of the major segments of the superordinate lineage, in the order of seniority of their eponymous ancestors, and downwards through the subordinate levels of the line particularly concerned. The level of major segments involved is always an index

17: Southall E-5 (1946-1947) 1952 FL11 Luo FL11

of the importance of the occasion, and of the status of the individual concerned in it, and the procedure further epitomizes the internal structure of these groups.

For present purposes the significance of all these ritually occasioned social gatherings is that their place of meeting is always the family homestead, and in this way from time to time even the meanest members of the least important family have vividly impressed upon them the segmentary principles of the social structure to which they belong. The underlying economic and domestic arrangements through which these assemblies are, as it were, financed by the provision of food—which may be required to feed large numbers of people for days on end—themselves occasion a subsidiary marshalling of lineage organization. Convenience dictates that the families most concerned in this shall be those which are not only agnatically but spatially nearest to one another. This means that the levels of structure epitomized are similar to those involved in the *riso* ceremony. The primary organizational responsibility falls on the chief wife or widow of the homestead of assembly, who orders the contributions of its other female household heads. Then the senior wife of the head of the *anyuola* group at the next higher level of segmentation has a like duty to organize the contribution of her group, followed by the female heads of each *anyuola* co-ordinate to hers in order of genealogical seniority. After this the next higher level of segments is called into play, and so on, the number of subsequent levels which must be called upon depending on the scale of the occasion, as reflected in the numbers of those who attend and the length of time that they stay. Thus not only as members of the entertaining homestead, but also as members of the many neighbouring homesteads drawn in to assist in the commissariat, the housewives and elder daughters who cook the food, the young children of both sexes who must run as messengers and act as carriers of the food itself, all repeatedly have impressed upon their experience the lower levels of the lineage structure which permeates their society. In the rural isolation of a subsistence economy these are the events which loom large on the social horizon, occupying the mind and feeding conversation. It is hardly surprising that a people like the Luo grow up with a complete practical grasp, at a level which requires no abstract formulation, of those principles of social organization which seem at first so intricate and confusing to the outsider.

Anyuola segments within the minimal *dhoot* and *gweng'* also act as mutual assistance groups. It is within them that cattle may be borrowed for making marriage payments. Nowadays it is the members of such groups who rely on one another for the loan of small sums of money required in the many transactions resulting from new needs. They tend to meet for consideration of any matters of common concern; these meetings are rather informal, but usually recognize the leadership of the member who is eldest by lineage seniority, and are often accompanied by the drinking of beer.

VII. THE MECHANISM OF SEGMENTATION

It is now possible to give further details of how certain class B segments (*anyuola*) within a minimal class A lineage achieve class A status themselves as units of primary settlement, the basic segments in the articulated system of *gweng'* and *dhoot*. When this occurs, of course, the previous minimal class A segment is raised from its

20:Ominde I-5 (ca. 1948) 1952
FL11 Luo FL11

deliver. A person standing behind an expectant mother may also be driven away in the fear that if that person's birth had been difficult the birth of the coming child would be equally difficult. Social regulations connected with greetings are found among the pagans and these may result from the instruction of a medicine man. Thus he may prescribe the length of time in which an expectant mother is not allowed to greet those whom she happens to meet on the road.

Although in the family circle a woman is not allowed to overwork during this period, conditions are such that, if left to themselves, they continue with very strenuous work until the time of birth. In the past, expectant mothers stored food which they ate after giving birth. These foodstuffs might be dried meat, dried fish, ghee, and corn for gruel. Nowadays the availability of fresh meat has made it possible to supply women with sufficient food even although it is very expensive.

The amount of rest given to an expectant mother depends on the husband's position in society. With the poorer families, hard work continues till the time of birth. Thus, at one time a woman called Andege took some ripe bananas to Kisumu in the morning, returned at about ½ p.m., and at 4 p.m. gave birth to her daughter, Rapuoda.

Guessing the child's sex. In guessing at the child's sex before birth, the mothers generally rely on past experience. It is recognized to be very difficult, and even impossible, to predict the sex of the first child. Certain guesses depend on the health of the mother, though such guesses are not made public. For a male child it is believed that the mother should be thin; with a female child, the reverse, and these views are probably based on the assumption that male children sap their mother's energy to a greater degree. This is likewise the basis of